DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 436 916 EC 307 590

TITLE	West Virginia Services for Children with Deafblindness. Final Report. Project Period 10/1/95 - 9/30/99.
INSTITUTION	West Virginia State Dept. of Education, Charleston. Office of Special Education Programs and Assurances.
SPONS AGENCY	Special Education Programs (ED/OSERS), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	21p.
CONTRACT	H025A50042
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Agency Cooperation; *Deaf Blind; *Delivery Systems; *Disability Identification; Elementary Secondary Education; Family Programs; *Information Dissemination; Inservice Education; Outreach Programs; Postsecondary Education; *Technical Assistance; Training; Transitional Programs
IDENTIFIERS	Related Services; *West Virginia

ABSTRACT

This final report describes the accomplishments and activities of a four-year federally funded project to improve special education and related services for children with deafblindness in West Virginia. The paper describes the accomplishments of each of the project's eight objectives: (1) to identify children with deafblindness; (2) to train teachers and service providers; (3) to develop and maintain regional consultants; (4) to expand the project for the transition of youth with deafblindness from school to community; (5) to provide consultation and training to families; (6) to facilitate cooperation and coordination of the delivery of services with relevant state agencies; (7) to disseminate information about resources to service providers, families, and the community; and (8) to utilize an advisory committee in the development and implementation of services. Discussion of lessons learned from the project emphasizes the value of ongoing statistical analysis of the deafblind census for targeting service delivery, modification of the model using regional consultants, and use of a personal approach with families. Attached are a project newsletter and a mini-library list. (Contains 24 references.) (DB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 436 916

West Virginia Services for Children with Deafblindness

Final Report

Project Period
10/1/95 - 9/30/99

West Virginia Department of Education
Office of Special Education
1900 Kanawha Boulevard
Building 6 Room 304
Charleston, WV 25305

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EC 307590

Executive Summary

West Virginia has been the recipient of funding for services for children and youth who are deafblind since 1990. Throughout those years, there has been a consistent move forward.

In the past four years of the grant there have been many positive impacts in the delivery of services. They include 1) a more person centered approach to planning and implementing programs, 2) deafblindness is seen as a unique and separate disability apart from deaf and hard of hearing or blind and visually impaired, 3) systems change has occurred in several areas of services due to collaboration among agencies, 4) a stronger link between Early Intervention, schools and Adult Services provides a more seamless approach and continuous flow of support, 5) placement of the family at the center of the teams and increased respect for their knowledge has added strength to the project, 6) working the other states to share information and resources to provide best practices offers more opportunities for training and implementation.

The child count went from 88 in 1995 to 118 in 1999. With a staff of two, both working part time, it has been necessary to develop a cadre of experts throughout the state with specialized expertise relevant to specific needs of children with deafblindness. This is a continuous process but the increase in diversity and specialization has had a positive impact which will continue into the next four years of the project.

Describe the Project

The primary purpose of this project was to improve special education and related services for children with deafblindness in West Virginia. The project has had eight major objectives: 1) to identify children with deafblindness; 2) to train teachers and service providers; 3) to develop and maintain regional consultants; 4) to expand the project for the transition of youth with deafblindness from school to community; 5) to provide consultation and training to families; 6) to facilitate cooperation and coordination of the delivery of services with the Department of Health and Human Resources, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, state operated programs and other agencies; 7) to disseminate information about resources to service providers, families, and the community; and 8) to utilize an advisory committee in the development and implementation of services. The coordination of the project activities was assumed by the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs and Assurances.

Summarize the goals as stated in the proposal

Goal 1

Identify children with deafblindness.

Goal 2

Train teachers and service providers to meet the needs of children with deafblindness in rural West Virginia.

Goal 3

Develop and maintain regional consultants.

Goal 4

Expand the project for the transition of youth and adults with deafblindness from school to community.

Goal 5

Provide consultation and training to families.

Goal 6

Facilitate cooperation and coordination of the delivery of services with the Department of Health and Human Resources, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, state operated programs and other agencies.

Goal 7

Disseminate information about resources to service personnel, families, and the community.

Goal 8

Utilize an advisory committee in the development and implementation of services.

If modifications to the goals were made, state this and explain.

Goal #3 To develop and maintain regional consultants. The location and distribution of children who are deafblind varies substantially on a yearly basis. The region which was previously selected for a Regional Consultant dropped in population to only two children while another area increased by three. It became apparent that the use of Regional Consultants required travel too extensive over a large and rural geographic territory. This model does not appear to be effective for the project. If the consultant is a teacher, local districts cannot release them for the length of time required. Currently, the two population clusters are Kanawha County, where the Project is located, and the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind, where a major focus of training activities has occurred. As a result, the approach of a regional consultant has been reconsidered and modified.

Context

Identify the background in which this project was implemented to help the reader

understand the accomplishments and direction of the project.

This grant was administered through the West Virginia Department of Education, Office of Special Education. The goals and objectives of this grant were implemented consistent with policies and procedures of the Department therefore strengthening the success that this grant has enjoyed. West Virginia does not recognize deafblindness as a singular disability requiring certification for teaching. Children listed on the Deafblind Census were therefore served by teachers of the Hearing Impaired, Visually Impaired, and/or Mentally Impaired. As a result, regardless of the child's placement, technical assistance providing information on deafblindness was always needed and generally welcomed.

Describe how the goals were accomplished.

Goal 1 Identify children with deafblindness

As previously stated, the census numbers increased from 88 to 118 in four years. Statistical analysis of the census distribution throughout the state allowed project management to target unidentified areas. For example, early identification of children with deafblindness was not effectively being done. Strengthening the collaboration with Early Intervention enabled us to significantly increase child identification at a younger age. Additionally, geographic areas of the state where children were not being identified were also targeted via Special Education Directors meetings, Early Intervention workshops, and other collaborative efforts. A combination of these two approaches (geographic areas and age areas) increased our child count substantially as stated above. A secondary benefit has been a strengthening of overall services from this project.

Goal 2 Train teachers and service providers to meet the needs of children with deafblindness in rural West Virginia

As reflected in the performance reports previously submitted, tremendous amounts of technical assistance via workshops, conferences, and on-site consultation, was provided. Child count data was used to target areas not requesting assistance. Phone calls or visits to families and teachers in those areas ensured they were aware of the opportunities available.

The philosophy of the project has always been to invite interested parties to all trainings. Although the project sponsored only those who were providing services to children with deafblindness and families, others were invited to share in the learning opportunities. They attended at their own cost. The benefits of this philosophy over the grant cycle enabled the project to develop and maintain a reputation of quality services for children with deafblindness and other significant disabilities.

Goal 3 Develop and maintain regional consultants

As stated above, this goal was modified in order to enhance the delivery of services.

Goal 4 Expand the project for the transition of youth and adults with deafblindness from school to community

The transition goal (for children 14 and older) has gone through a change of its own in the past four years. More intensive efforts have been given in the form of student-focused model-sites approach. Beginning with the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind's Multihandicapped Unit, and then their Secondary School for the Deaf, five students were identified who will return to various areas throughout the state after school completion. These are students with additional disabilities beyond the vision and hearing impairments. Working with the families, Vocational Rehabilitation, Behavioral Health, Autism Training Center and others, there have been community assessments, summer placements, behavior plans, mappings and team trainings to support these individuals. At this point, the transition goal is a "work in progress" with these students being between 16 and 20 years of age. Biannual updates and continued support is provided to this model. These experienced teams are now replicating best practices to expand and reach others both in their locations as well as traveling to other parts of the state to help new teams.

Semi-annual trainings have been organized by the project in communication and behavior. This is a collaboration between NTAC, Helen Keller National Center, Vocational Rehabilitation, Behavioral Health, and the Deafblind Project. Those attending have included student centered transition teams with teachers and families, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, group home staff, job coaches, advocates, and Behavioral Health Center administrators.

The second phase of the transition model has begun as of June 1999 with three high school students with Usher Syndrome being identified for intense transition services. This is in the very early stages and will continue into the next grant cycle.

Goal 5 Provide consultation and training to families

The first year and a half of the grant cycle found the families component weak due to lack of staff time. An additional person was hired to take on the families and transition facets of the project. Since that time there has been a significant increase in family participation. Personal contact with families through phone calls and home visits has increased involvement.

For the first time, Family Weekends were held in March 1998 with 35 participants and October 1998 with 46 participants. Both were held in West Virginia State Parks with child care and discussion groups. The Summer Institute, a four day training that is offered to child specific teams, has families as well as teachers and

support staff attending. Through these, a core group of families have come to know each other and now get excited to be together again. They are evolving as planners for their own future events and will assist in encouraging new families to join with them.

In August 1999, a family attended the National Parents Conference in New Orleans. This has increased enthusiasm for others to participate in national conferences in the future.

Goal 6 Facilitate cooperation and coordination of the delivery of services with the Department of Health and Human Services, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, state operated programs and other agencies

West Virginia has always maintained a strong connection between agencies. The size of the state, the past employment links of Project staff, and the location of the Project office all lend themselves to positive partnerships between agencies. It is very easy for both staff and other support personnel to easily access their counterparts in related agencies. Team approaches to providing services and joint training continue to increase the confidence and success to the project.

Deafblind Project staff, though small in number in comparison to other agencies, are assertive in initiating collaborative links. When opportunities arise to include others, we extend an invitation for participation at their own cost.

Goal 7 Disseminate information about resources to service personnel, families, and the community

Over the four year cycle, the project has become a distribution center for teachers, families, service providers and other interested parties. Utilizing census information, a data base was developed to target each classroom teacher for specific information and training opportunities. Additionally, each family receives information of general interest to all families. Separate mailing lists of interest only to speciality groups, for example, Ushers Syndrome, Braille users, etc., are used for more specific information.

Goal 8 Utilize an advisory committee in the development and implementation of services

The Advisory Committee was used to provide guidance and ongoing program modification to the overall implementation of this grant. However, as explained below, we found a much more effective mechanism for guidance to ensure effective technical assistance by using small focus groups of recipients. The third grant cycle reflects what we learned.

Describe problems encountered and how they were solved. Identify and describe

the lessons learned.

Ongoing statistical analysis of the West Virginia Deafblind Census proved to be an excellent mechanism for monitoring and improving services to children with deafblindness. Allowing the Project Staff to target underserved as well as under-identified areas of the state. Targeting specific statistics allowed the dissemination of materials to be done much more efficiently and proved to be much more beneficial to its recipients. It enabled us to target training centered around etiology, age, and common concerns.

As stated under the modifications of goals, the provision of regional consultants was not an efficient use of project funds. This project learned a much more efficient mechanism for delivering technical assistance for a low incidence disability in a rural state in the development of a cadre of experts and building a web of support as reflected in the current grant cycle. Using model sites and lead teachers has proved a method that works well in a state the size of West Virginia. Many opportunities for sharing are available to project participants.

The Appalachian culture is much more receptive to a personal approach. Efforts were made to contact each family on a minimum of twice per year. We found that this increased their participation in training, weekends, etc. Now in the current grant cycle we see the fruits of our labor and see such things as families helping families, attendance at national meeting, etc.

The high illiteracy rate in West Virginia, of course, also includes parents of children with deafblindness. We realized that many of the families were receiving written information concerning the project and written invitations to training and events. Possibly families that needed the help and support that the project could offer were not receiving the information in a form they could understand. With that realization, Project staff began a more intensive effort to contact families that we had not met by phone. And, in fact, we did find that our suspicions were right. More than one family told us that they had received information but were unable to understand its meaning.

A similar realization was that the families who needed strength that could be gained from relationships made at such events as Family Weekend had obstacles to overcome before they could attend. Confidence in whether their child's medical needs would be met, assistance with transportation needs, and being allowed to bring a respite worker, grandparent or friend, made it more possible for them to attend.

The use of focus groups in addition to the Advisory Committee is reflected in our new grant cycle. Originally implemented during this project, focus groups provided an excellent view of the project's effectiveness by the recipients. An objective facilitator was critical to allow a thorough examination.

Discuss the implications for policy, practice, and research. Include recommendations for OSEP.

Due to the small grant, our concentration has been focused on the delivery of child

specific technical assistance as opposed to the development of research models. We recognized that utilizing research based practices in child specific technical assistance was the most efficient use of our project dollars. Therefore, West Virginia used research based methods modified and tailored it to our children.

This project was and is ideally located within the Department of Education, Office of Special Education enhancing its ability to impact on the development of policies and procedures effecting children with disabilities including deafblindness. Also the ability to be involved with the implementation of these policies via technical assistance, monitoring and compliance that are an overall component of the Office of Special Education has resulted in a tremendous impact for children. Perhaps this would not be as effective in other states but relocation of the project in WV would do a disservice for children.

This project also believed that the delivery of "A" in FAPE takes on new meaning when dealing with a low incident population in a rural and poor state. Our philosophy of including everyone in our trainings gives increased understanding of the unique implications of deafblindness to a broader range of individuals and agencies. This project has blended teachers and families as equals in joint training efforts which resulted in the strengthening of the perception of the families' role in their child's education program.

Attach supporting documents only. Confer with your Project Officer before appending additional copies of project products.

Attached you will find newsletters and mini-library lists.

RESOURCE LIBRARY FOR TEACHERS AND SERVICE PROVIDERS OF DEAF-BLIND CHILDREN

Selection of the materials for the sets was made through the cooperative efforts of teachers and consultants from TRACES, D-B LINK, and others such as Terry Rafalowski Welch, to represent the diverse needs of children with deaf-blindness. Areas addressed include communication, mobility (orientation and mobility as well as sitting, standing, and walking skills), inclusions and integration, medical aspects, family resources, sign language, assistive technology, etc. Each set is a mini library designed to provide teachers, families and service provider a comprehensive approach to serving children with deaf-blindness.

Teachers- 38 sets (one to each teacher except where there are two teachers in one school)
RESAs- 8 sets
Part H on Quarrier- 1 set
IRC- 1 set
WVSDB- 1 set
Deaf-Blind Project- 1 set

Total = 50 SETS

NOTES:
(This is really great stuff!)

Etiologies and Characteristics of Deaf-Blindness
Teaching Research Publications
Western Oregon State College
345 N. Monmouth Ave.
Monmouth, OR 97361
(503) 838-9792

Profiles
Individuals with Deaf-Blindness
Indiana Deaf-Blind Project

Hand-In-Hand
American Foundation for the Blind
c/o American Book Center Brooklyn Navy Yard
Building No. 3
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11205
(718) 852-9873

Children with Disabilities: A Medical Primer
Batshaw and Perret
3rd edition
Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.
P.O. Box 10624
Baltimore, Md 21285
1-800-638-3775

C.O.A.CH.
Choosing Options and Accommodations for Children
Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.
P.O. Box 10624
Baltimore, Md 21285
1-800-638-3775

Welcoming Children who are Deaf-Blind into a Typical Classroom
Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.
P.O. Box 10624
Baltimore, Md 21285
1-800-638-3775

Merck Manual
Medical Dictionary
Walden Book Store Town Center

Homemade Battery Powered Toys and Educational Devices for Severely Handicapped Children

More Homemade Battery Devices for Severely Handicapped Children with suggestive Activities

Total Augmentative Communication in the Early Childhood Classroom

Above three books from:
Linda J. Burkhart
8503 Rhode Island Ave
College Park, MD 20740
or PO Box 793
College Park, MD 20740
1-301-345-9152

Deaf-Blind Education:
Developing Individually Appropriate Communication and Language Environments
Book A:
Set No. 1-- Orientation to Deaf-Blindness and Crucial Concepts from Related Fields
Set No. 2--The Congenital Combinations of Auditory and Visual Disabilities
Book B:
Set No. 3--The Totally Deaf-Blind Child
Set No. 4--Usher Syndrome-Changing Educational, Communication and Language Needs in Deafness, with Later Onset of Visual Impairments
New England Regional Center for Services to Deaf-Blind Children
Perkins School for the Blind

Perkins Activity and Resource Guide
A Handbook for Teachers and Parents of Students with Visual and Multiple Disabilities
Volumes One and Two

Videos:
Using Tactile Interactive Conversational Signing
5 Videos--13 lessons from:
Ski Hi Resources
Hope Enterprises
1-800-752-9533

The following was ordered through:
Teaching Research Publications
Western Oregon State College
345 N. Monmouth Ave.
Monmouth, OR 97361
(503) 838-9792

Sensory Assessment Manual
by Pamela J. Cress

Augmentative Communication for Children with Deaf-Blindness - Guidelines for Decision Making
by: Cynthia J. Cress et.al.

Play Activities and Emergent Language: Intervention Procedures for Young Children with Deaf-Blindness

by Joan Rich et.al.

Enhancing Interactions Between Service Providers and Individuals who are Severely Disabled: Strategies for Developing Non-Symbolic Communication
by Elfin Siege-Causey and Doug Guess

Communication Curriculum for Children and Students with Severe Handicaps
by Kathleen Stremel-Campbell

Communication Placement Assessment for Children and Students with Severe Handicaps
by Judy Clark-Guida and Kathleen Stremel-Campbell

Videos:
You and Me
Interpreter-Tutor

(two more videos will be encumbered but not sent until spring)

For IRC, Shawnee Hills and Part H Only

Ski Hi Resources
Understanding and Interacting with Infants, Toddlers and Preschoolers
Hope Enterprises
1-800-752-9533

Ski Hi Video Series Interactive Series and Coactive Signing
Hope Enterprises
1-800-752-9533

a:\liblist

A newsletter for families, teachers, and friends of children in West Virginia with hearing and vision impairments.

Keeping in Touch

Fall 1998

Henry R. Marockie, State Superintendent of Schools

THE WEST VIRGINIA DEAFBLIND PROJECT

The West Virginia Department of Education implements a statewide project to provide services to children who are deafblind. The objectives of the Deafblind Project focus on the provision of technical assistance and training to create appropriate educational opportunities for children who are deafblind and their families. The Office of Special Education in the West Virginia Department of Education is located in Building 6 in the Capitol Complex.

Dr. Dee Bodkins
Director of Special Education
WV Department of Education
Annette Carey
Deafblind Project Coordinator
Office of Special Education
Ruth Ann King
Deafblind Project Associate
Building 6 Room 304
Pam Carte, Secretary
1900 Kanawha Blvd. E.
Phone 1-800-642-8541 (V/TDD)
Charleston, WV 25305-0330
1-304-558-2696 (V/TDD)
FAX: 304-558-3741

Dr. Michael Valentine has recently accepted the position of Assistant State Superintendent of Schools for West Virginia. His appointment began July 1. Though he will be missed in the Deafblind Project, we are proud that he has received this position. It will be beneficial to have such a committed individual who understands the needs of individuals with sensory impairments in the Assistant Superintendent position.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

We have several opportunities for you to meet with other parents and teachers. Please consider attending these!

TRANSITION WEEKEND

This weekend is designed to assist families and teachers in designing a smooth and successful transition from school to adult and community life. It will be held at Mineral Wells Comfort Suites from March 12 to 14. Individual information will be provided specific to the child in mind. This is open to all families and teachers of children 14 years old and older who are listed on the deafblind census. You will receive more information in the near future.

SUMMER INSTITUTE

The Summer Institute for teachers and families will be held at Canaan Valley State Park from July 19 to July 22, 1999.
Terry Rafalowski Welch and Toni Waylor Bowen will be the presenters. Contact Annette Carey for further information.

CAMP GIZMO

This week-long Assistive Technology Camp is for children who are 1 to 8 years old and their families and service providers. It will be held at West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind in Romney, July 27 to August 1, 1999. For more information, call Kathy Knighton at 1-800-642-8541.

CELEBRATING CONNECTIONS:

Connecting Communities Through Early Care and Education will be held February 25-27, 1999 at the Charleston Civic Center. The conference is for families with children birth to eight. To register, call Ginger Huffman at 1-800-642-8541.

Hope to see you there!

DEAR PARENTS AND TEACHERS,

This has been such an exciting year for us! We have had the chance to have two Family Weekends, a Summer Institute, and many classroom and home visits. The best part is getting to know each other!

For the eighteen families that came to the Family Weekends at Pipestem and Canaan Valley, it was a chance to relax with their own family and meet with others with similar situations. We see this growing and folks beginning to look forward to the next time we can all be together.

At Summer Institute we had four families and twenty-five teachers. What a great experience to have parents and teachers working together in an informal setting to plan for the children's needs.

For those of you who have been thinking about attending one of our weekends or Institutes, but just have not been quite ready, we encourage you to join us. You will notice that we have a Transition Weekend planned for spring. Our Summer Institute is already scheduled for summer.

The Transition Weekend is for families whose children are fourteen and older. During that time we will have speakers and discussions concerning issues related to the child finishing school and their needs as they become adults for finding work, housing, and recreation in their community.

One of the goals for our coming year is to become involved on the national level with parent and educational organizations that serve the deafblind population. Two of our teachers, Debby Budash and Jennifer Hardy, recently attended "Closing the Gap", a national conference on assistive technology. This came out of the enthusiasm generated at Summer Institute for more assistance for both families and teachers in this area. Next we hope to send a family or two to one of the national conferences.

Please join us! We need to make our circle of friends bigger!

--The Project Staff

NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

As we travel around the state to homes and classrooms, we see many exciting things that the kids are doing. We want to begin featuring some of these in our newsletters. If you have something to share, let us know!

EMPTY BOWLS

Students at West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind have been part of a wonderful program, "Empty Bowls". Teacher, Stella Walker, helps students including DJ Burns and Helen Adkins, pictured here, to make and glaze hand-built pottery bowls. The bowls are sold and money from the sales is contributed to feed the less fortunate in the Romney community.

It has been a happy life. My limitations never make me sad. Perhaps there is a touch of yearning at times. But it is vague, like a breeze among flowers. The wind passes and the flowers are content.

Helen Keller
June 1956

MY BROTHER, DARYL

He's 18 years old, got a 30 - 40 IQ.
He's been in school 12 years - elementary school.
Daryl has had a number of years of individual instruction.
He's learned to do a lot of things.
My brother can do lots of things he couldn't do before!

He can put 100 pegs in a board in less than 10 minutes while in his seat with 95 percent accuracy...

But, he can't put quarters in vending machines.

On command he can "touch" nose, shoulder, leg, foot, hair, and ear...

But he can't blow his nose when needed.

He can sort blocks by color; up to 10 different colors...

But, he can't sort clothes, whites from colors for washing.

He can roll Play Dough and make wonderful clay snakes!

But, he can't roll bread dough and cut out biscuits.

He can count to 100 by rote memory...

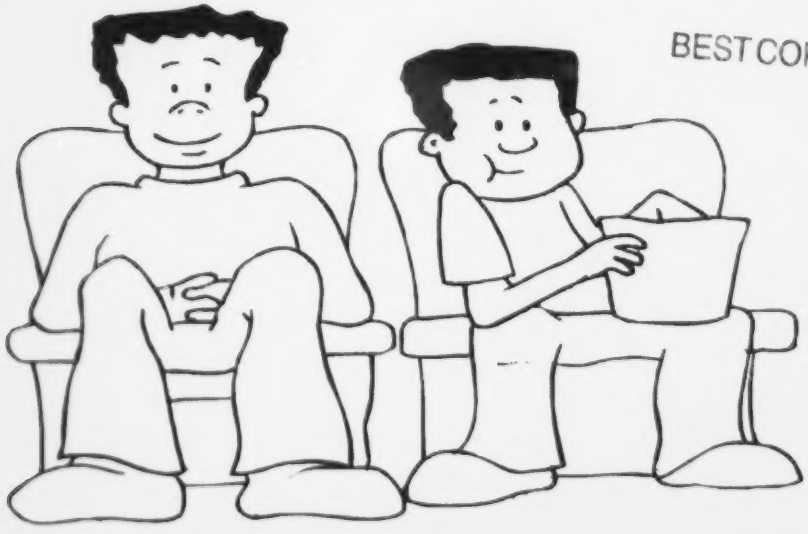
But de doesn't know how many dollars to pay the waitress for a $2.59 McDonald's Coupon Special.

He can sit in a circle with appropriate behavior and sing songs and play "Duck, Duck, Goose"...

But nobody else in his neighborhood his age seems to want to do that.

I guess he's just not ready yet.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



FAMILY WEEKENDS 1998

Something new this year from the Deafblind Project were the Family Weekends. The first was held at Pipestem State Park in March and the second was at Canaan Valley State Park in October. Parents attended discussion groups on Saturday while the children had supervised play activities.

Many hours of "fun and games" were led by Carole and Russ Cassidy, teachers from Mercer County. Helping them were volunteers from Bonner Scholars and Civitan groups. A Saturday night party was held while parents had a "Night Out".

Chastity Guilliams chats with Carole Cassidy, Tracy Cox, and Abby King.

Friendships are made at Family Weekend. David Carter, Bobbie Bell, and John Carey shared lots of fun.

A hayride Sunday morning was enjoyed by Michael Smith, Denise and Bryan Cox, and Rhonda Allen.

David Carter from Raleigh County was a hit at the impromptu talent show!

Lunch Sunday, at the Pipestem weekend, was a weiner roast at the end of the hayride.

FACILITATING FRIENDSHIPS AND INTERACTIONS

Developing relationships with others is important for any individual. Unfortunately, individuals with disabilities, especially severe disabilities, frequently have fewer friends and fewer interactions with peers than do individuals without disabilities. In order for interactions to occur with peers without disabilities and ultimately to have friendships develop, it is frequently necessary for parents and teachers to facilitate interactions between students with and without disabilities. It is insufficienct simply to have students with disabilities physically placed in classrooms with their nondisabled peers. It is likely that individuals with and without disabilities will need ideas for ways in which to interact with one another. Here are some ideas for strategies that parents, teachers and others can implement to facilitate interactions between individuals with and without disabilities.

Facilitating friendships and interactions between peers can involve several strategies:

1. Provide opportunities that help to bring students together (e.g. classroom activities). Encourage students to work together on class assignments and in special classes: such as art, music, library, and so forth. Encourage "buddy systems" for school activities as well as activities before and after school.

2. Present the individual with disabilities to others in a positive manner. Have the student with disabilities share, independently or through adaptations, his/her special interests or talents with the class. This will enable students to view the student with disabilities as a competent individual.

3. Make accommodations or adaptations in the environment to help involve the individual with disabilities in meaningful ways. Avoid seating the student with disabilities on the periphery of activities. Make adaptations to classroom activities, instructions, and materials as needed.

4. Use the classroom curriculum to teach about diversity, equality, and friendships. Discuss similarities and differences among students in the classroom. The classroom teacher may facilitate discussions regarding concerns, fears, and questions that may arise pertaining to friendships with students with disabilities. Ask peers to assist in planning strategies for facilitating friendships with students with disabilities.

5. Use teaching methodologies that encourage cooperation among students and expect the student with disabilities to participate in class activities with his/her peers. Give the student with disabilities valued roles in cooperative learning groups.

6. Minimize adult presence as much as possible so that the adult does not interfere with interactions be tween the students.

7. As the teacher, demonstrate acceptance of and positive interactions with the student.

JUNK TECH; USING AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Purchasing equipment to accommodate individuals with physical and visual disabilities can sometimes be quite expensive. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate inexpensive options, shortcuts, and various methods of organizing and improving technology and adaptations.

KEYBOARD TIPS

There are numerous, inexpensive ways to modify the keyboard. These modifications make using the keyboard easier and more manageable:

- √ To keep your keyboard, switch, (or student) from sliding around, try using Slip Stop. It is used to keep rugs from sliding on the floor and to keep things from moving in RVs. You can find it in any carpet store or general purpose store.
- √ Saran Wrap makes great moisture guard for the keyboard.
- √ Stick on earrings, found in any dollar store make great key markers for programs that require only a few keys to operate.
- √ Avery makes self-sticking coding labels in bright colors. The 1/2" or 3/4 " dots work well for key markers, and they are fairly easy to remove.
- √ Try constructing a homemade keyguard by cutting out a piece of plexiglass the size of your keyboard. Photocopy your keyboardand use this template to drill your holes. It will assist students who accidentally press the wrong keys at once in the effort to reach their desired keystrokes. You can also use a shoebox lid to accomplish this task. Simply cut out the area above the keys students need to use for a particular software program.
- √ Another quick tip is that detachable keyboards don't have to remain on a horizontal plane. Propping the keyboard at a slight angle or even at a 90 degree angle might allow students easier accessibility in pressing the keys.

MOUSE/JOYSTICK TIPS

The main function of the mouse is to point and select menu items, text, and graphic objects on the computer screen. The joystick is a peripheral with a rod or lever that provides two-dimensional control of objects on the screen. Listed below are several solutions for persons having difficulty using the standard mouse or joystick.

- √ Easy Access and Access DOS contain files that allow the student to use the numeric keypad in lieu of the mouse for Macintosh and IBM computers.
- √ Hot gluing a giant button to the mouse button creates easy identification.
- √ Plastic box drink holders, hot glued or attached with Velcro to the side of the monitor, make a great mouse holder and keep the mouse neatly tucked away when not in use.
- √ Cut a hole in a solid rubber or sponge ball to provide individuals a larger surface area when grasping the top of the joystick.

MONITOR TIPS

- √ Attach a Post-It pad to the corner of your monitor to let your students know their daily assignments or instructions.
- √ Monitors are fairly durable and will operate in either an upright position on the computer cart or on their side on the floor. Consider the comfort of the individual when selecting appropriate placement of the monitor.
- √ TV swivels or "Lazy Susan" are good for adjusting the position of the monitor when using the computer.

HOMEMADE SWITCHES

Switches allow individuals with limited motor skills to activate devices and appliances and offer alternative access to computers. There are many commercial products on the market that offer switches for virtually any body part that has controlled motor movement. It is sometimes difficult and expensive to find a switch that is "just right" to fit the specific needs of an individual. For these applications, homemade switches can be one alternative.

- √ Homemade switches can be made out of almost anything. The only concept you need to know when making a switch is that when two pieces of metal touch, they complete a circuit and activation occurs.
- √ The plastic boxes that store your video or audio tapes make great switches. Solder one lead to a piece of tin and glue it to the inside of the lid and do the same to the other end, gluing it to the bottom. Use a piece of foam to provide some "spring" to the switch.
- √ The bubble gum plastic containers that look like chewing tobacco cans (get the ones with the hinged lids) make great switches that can be held in one hand. Assembly is similar to the video box switch.
- √ Bookends make great switch mounts. Use Velcro to mount your switch and a C-clamp to hold it in place.

STAND ALONE ITEMS

- √ Greeting cards that allow you to record a message make great communication devices.

  Short loop tapes that run continuous messages are inexpensive communication options. For the price of a tape and a portable player, an individual has a lightweight, portable communication device.

by Fred Pellerito from Technology Center for Special Educaiton, University of Missouri - Kansas City

SUMMER INSTITUTE 1998

Terry Rafalowski Welch and Toni Waylor Bowen are the presenters at Summer Institute.

Jim Wysopal, a teacher at West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind, demonstrates some of his assistive technology inventions on fellow teacher, Robin Ayers.

Terry Rafaloski Welch discusses communication needs with parents, Oscar and Mary Taylor, and teachers, Debby Budash and Jennifer Hardy.

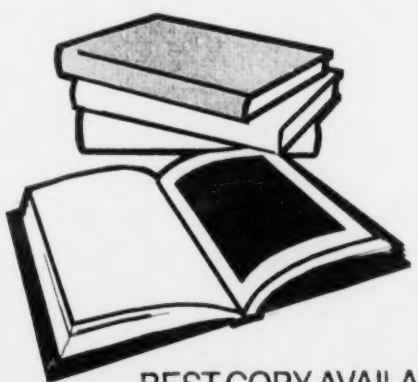
CHILDREN'S VISION REHABILITATION PROJECT

Some new services will be provided to children with visual impairments, their families and teachers. Children with visual impairments may be assessed in their home or neighboring counties in the presence of their vision or public school teachers and parents. A complete examination assessment of the child's current visual function and evaluation for appropriate visual devices will be performed. An Orientation and Mobility Specialist and an Education Low Vision Specialist will be available to make specific recommendations concerning the child's educational and classroom needs. Training in use of prescribed visual aids will be provided.

Large print materials are provided free of charge to school age children throughout West Virginia who have visual disabilities. They may be obtained through the Instructional Resource Center at the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind .

PROJECT LENDING LIBRARY

We have many books, videos, and articles in our office that are available on loan to you. They vary from information on communication methods to behavior to transition. These materials are for loan to families and teachers. If you would like more information call us at 1-800-642-8541.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

DEAFBLIND CENSUS 1998

The West Virginia Census for Children who are Deafblind has increased the number of identified children from about 70 to 109 in the past three years. This is due to increased awareness of the project by teachers, early intervention specialists, and families in the state.

Of the 109 children presently listed on the census, there are 62 attending public schools in their home county, 32 attending West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and Blind at Romney, 14 are pre-school age, and one in a private school. These children range in age from birth to twenty-two years old with 36 being fourteen and over. Fifty-six are boys and fifty-three are girls.

The areas that the Deafblind grant addresses are:

1. *Identify children with deafblindness;*
2. *Train teachers and service providers to meet the needs of children with deafblindness;*
3. *Expand the project for the transition of youth and adults who are deafblind from school to community;*
4. *Provide consultation and training to families; and,*
5. *Facilitate cooperation and coordination of the delivery of services with the Department of Health and Human Resources, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, state operated programs and other agencies.*
6. *Disseminate information about resources to service providers, families and the community.*

WEST VIRGINIA DEAFBLIND PROJECT
West Virginia State Department of Education
Office of Special Education
Building 6 Room 304
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Charleston, WV 25305-0330